

Serial No. : New National Stage Application
Filed : PCT Filing Date; October 29, 2003

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

(1) Page 1, line 4, please insert the following:

This application claims the benefit of foreign filing priority based on Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-316821, filed October 30, 2002.

(2) The paragraph from page 13, line 20 to page 14, line 14 has been amended as follows:

The superheated water vapor is introduced into a reservoir 4 through a superheated water vapor pipe 3, and further transmitted into a processing portion 5 through holes in a plate to come into contact with the raw material. The spent superheated water vapor is discharged out of the apparatus through water vapor ~~outlets—7~~ outlets 6. Preferably, the treatment time is appropriately selected in the range of 30 to 300 seconds. It goes without saying that treatment at an excessively low temperature or for an excessively short time lead to unsatisfactory results, and that treatment at an excessively high temperature or for an excessively long time can cause undesired side reactions. Consequently, such conditions hinder the production of satisfactory products. In order to apply the present invention effectively, it is preferable that the treatment be generally performed at a sufficiently high temperature much beyond 100°C for a shorter time. More specifically, a more

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preferred temperature is in the range of 160 to 190°C, and a more preferred time is in the range of 60 to 180 seconds.